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More on the Senators' Moscow Visit

Moscow has treated the three-day visit of 14 US Senators as a major event. The delegation received heavy press coverage and was feted by senior Soviet officials, including party chief Brezhnev.

The attention afforded the Senators is a manifestation of Moscow's increased recognition that the US Congress is an important factor in the development of US-Soviet relations. Last year, the Soviets sent a high-powered "legislative" delegation to Washington to get a better sense of the US Congress and to impart their views on major issues directly.

The Soviets clearly welcome the present visit as an opportunity to do some hard lobbying on behalf of controversial elements of Soviet detente policy. While the Soviet media stressed the positive significance of expanded legislative contacts, there was also a "frank and businesslike" airing of current problems in US-USSR relations.

The major message to the US law-makers was delivered by Mikhail Suslov, the leadership's senior ideologue. In characteristically blunt fashion, Suslov warned his audience that there was much in US policy that disturbed the Soviets. He was critical of the West's large expenditure on arms and of "stepped-up" activities of anti-detente elements in the US, themes also touched on by Brezhnev in last month's election speech.

Suslov made a strong brief for the Vladivostok agreements on the limitation of strategic arms. He seemed to imply that there was little more to be negotiated on those agreements, perhaps to make a case that if the differences that remain are not worked out, the fault would rest with Washington.

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Although Suslov dwelt only briefly on US-Soviet trade difficulties in his formal remarks, these and the emigration issue have been the subject of frequent heated exchange between the Senators and Soviet officials.

Incomplete accounts of these talks indicate that the Soviets did not give ground. They stuck to well-known arguments that "discriminatory" US legislation was self-defeating since the US would simply lose lucrative contracts to others. On the emigration issue, the Soviets said that they could not allow an "internal" matter to be tied to bilateral trade and that the decline in the number of Jews emigrating from the USSR is because fewer Soviet Jews want to leave the Soviet Union.

The Soviets did not push hard on the Middle East, but they did have some tough words on step-by-step diplomacy. This is in contrast to their rather relaxed public and private statements in recent weeks, and may have been especially designed to make clear to the Senators that they object to being cut out of Middle East diplomacy.

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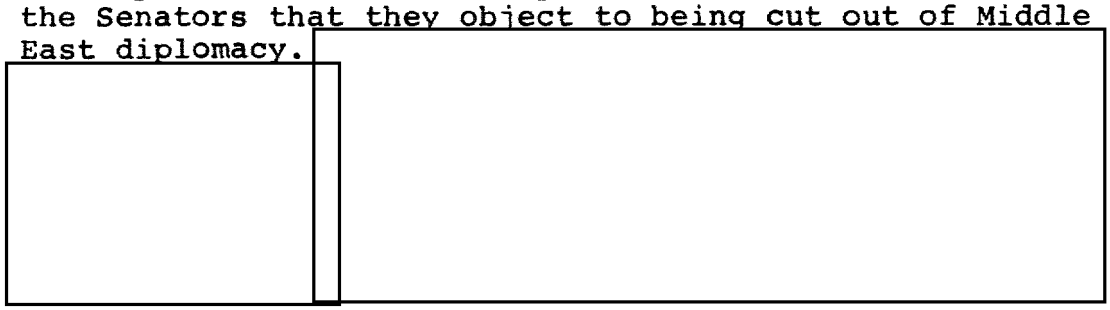

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Poland: Meat Shortages Again

The US embassy in Warsaw reports the reappearance of meat shortages--particularly of beef. The shortages appear to be unevenly distributed, with few complaints coming from the key industrial centers of Katowice and Gdansk and the severest shortages appearing in Warsaw and Krakow.

There are still no reports about a repetition of the violent consumer reaction that erupted earlier this year over pork shortages. Work slowdowns in Gdynia shipyards, however, apparently occurred in early May to protest inadequate meat supplies.

The shortages stem from continued high consumer demand for meat and a surge in raw meat exports. Raw meat exports--predominantly beef--soared by 56 percent in the first four months of 1975 over the comparable period of 1974.

Sharp boosts in wages and pensions during the first quarter of 1975 and continued shortages of attractive consumer manufactures have generated an excessive demand for meat that outstrips available meat supplies. Moreover, housewives may be adding to the demand by stockpiling meat in anticipation of the July 22 National Day celebration. The government may have decided to withhold meat from the market in order to build reserve stocks for the July 22 festivities.

The embassy reports that the government is now responding to the shortages by increasing meat supplies from domestic stocks just enough to avoid a crisis. There are no indications, however, that the regime plans to cut exports or increase imports of meat to ease the situation.

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Such an approach carries substantial political risks. Public sentiment toward the regime is probably more skeptical than at any time since 1971. Although party chief Gierek remains a popular figure, he is keenly aware that public discontent with economic issues played a crucial role in undermining the position and authority of his predecessor, Wladyslav Gomulka.

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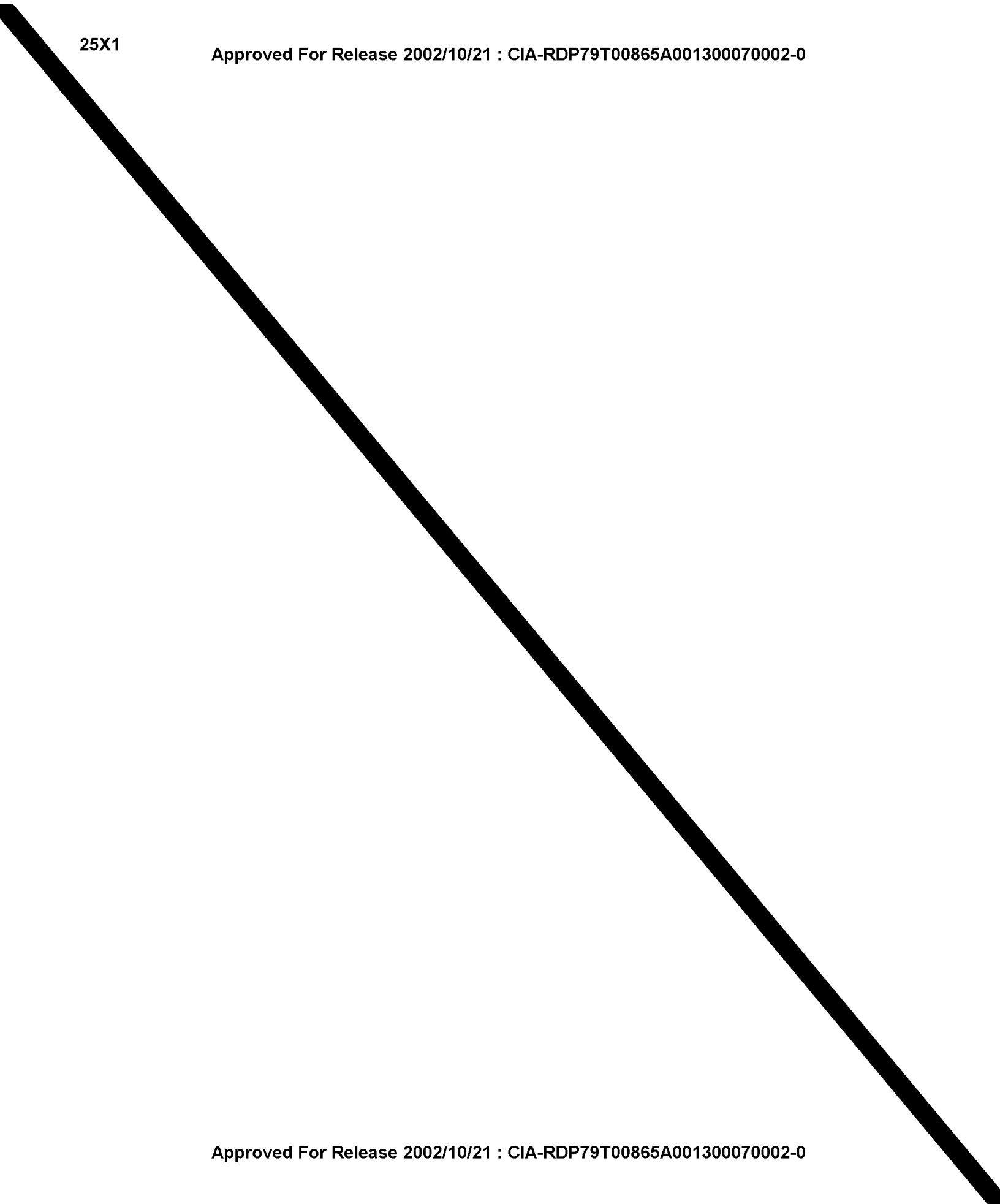

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